



# Note to Correspondents

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## **INDEPENDENT PANEL COMPLETES BIOTECHNOLOGY REPORT**

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A panel of independent scientists convened by EPA has completed work on its report which provides input on EPA's preliminary comprehensive reassessment of all *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) corn, cotton, and potato plant incorporated protectants. EPA solicited advice from the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) during a public meeting held October 18-20, 2000, to ensure that the Agency's reassessment of currently-registered biotechnology products utilizes the most current scientific understanding, and meets the most stringent public health and environmental safety standards.

Existing EPA registrations for corn and cotton Bt products (also called "plant incorporated protectants") will expire in September, 2001. These products are regulated by EPA as pesticides because they have been engineered to contain a naturally-occurring substance called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) which acts to combat insect pests. EPA included this time-conditional provision for plant incorporated protectants to ensure that these products be reevaluated regularly for safety to human health and to the environment. SAP review is an integral element of the Agency's overall efforts to ensure that its regulatory decisions are based on the most current scientific information, and are reached through an open and transparent process.

EPA's next step is to proceed with its comprehensive evaluation of the existing Bt registrations, taking into account all data available to the Agency, the SAP's recommendations, any newly submitted information and public comments. EPA will then publish the revised reassessment for public comment, which will include proposed registration decisions on the Bt products.

The SAP's report is available on-line at [www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap](http://www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap).